Programs Branch User Report

STUDY ON THE RESTIGOUCHE FAMILY CRISIS INTERVENERS PROGRAM

NO. 1984-76

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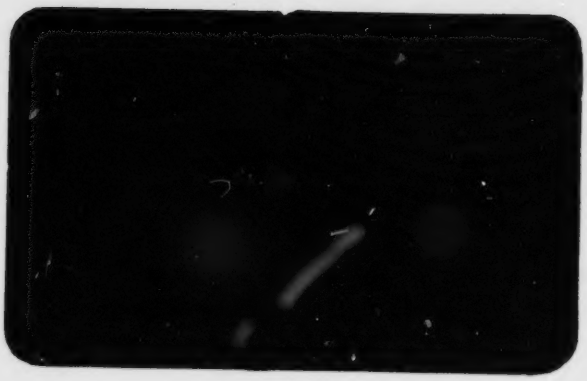

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This working paper was prepared under contract for the Research Division and is made available as submitted to the Ministry. The views expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada.

This working paper is available in French. Ce document de travail est disponible en français.

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PART I

SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This document comprises observations and data gathered over a two year period on the operations and progress of the Restigouche Family Crisis Interveners Project. The intent is to provide those interested with a package of information that may be of some direct use in the process of implementing a similar project in their locality. Every attempt has been made to insure that this document does not over burden the reader with a technical presentation of research findings. However, for those interested in such a presentation a research-oriented technical report is appended as Part II of this report.

Restigouche County, located in the North Eastern section of New Brunswick, covers just over 3,000 square miles and contains approximately 40,000 inhabitants. Except for the more or less urban centres of Campbellton City and the Town of Dalhousie, the bulk of the county's population resides in small communities lining the county's main roads and highways. Policing in the area is the responsibility of four R.C.M.P. Detachments located in the communities of Campbellton, the area surrounding Campbellton and the villages of Jacquet River and St. Quentin, and a municipal police force serving the Town of Dalhousie. It is in this setting that the Restigouche Family Crisis Interveners Project (R.F.C.I.) was established in 1980. This project represents a unique and innovative attempt to provide assistance to the victims of domestic violence within a more or less widely scattered rural area.

The initial beginnings of the R.F.C.I. project dates back to 1978 when area police and officials from the county's various helping agencies organized a series of meetings in order to seek solutions to a number of problems of mutual concern. In essence discussion at these meetings centered upon the lack of understanding and communication of the roles the police and the various dispensers of community services assume in dealing with family crisis situations.

Although much progress was eventually made in disseminating a general understanding of each agency's role in dealing with family crisis situations, it was felt that personnel turn-over and agency policy changes over time would eventually contribute to a general deterioration of the understandings reached. Continued co-operation among the various agencies involved was of particular concern to the police who, for the most part, are usually the first to be contacted when family discord erupts into violence. The need to establish a formal and ongoing mechanism for agency referral and immediate family crisis intervention was apparent. It was envisaged that such a mechanism would provide the police with the means to deal more effectively with family crisis situations, especially during non-business hours when access to helping agency personnel was limited (during the evening, on the weekend or during holidays).

During the remainder of 1978 and 1979, members of the original liaison body studied what had been done in other localities in dealing effectively with the often neglected problem of domestic violence. During this period additional individuals within the Restigouche area were recruited to join with those present to form a citizens committee to confront the task of establishing a mechanism for family crisis intervention. This committee eventually consisted of 25 members representing a broad spectrum of the community interests (law enforcement, family court, social services, corrections, mental health, clergy, salvation army and legal aid, only to name a few).

In an attempt to widden perspective on the issues raised, advice and support was sought from the Regional Consultation Centre of the Federal Solicitor General. Continued liaison between the Citizen's Committee and the Solicitor General's Regional Consultant eventually resulted in a proposal calling for the establishment of a demonstration project focussing on domestic violence within the Restigouche area. The initial proposal envisaged the establishment of a family crisis unit similar in structure and philosophy to the London Family Consultant Service that was then operational in the city of London, Ontario. In essence the London program utilizes lay professionals to work with the police on calls involving domestic violence or abuse. The intervention strategy of the London project depended heavily on the idea that immediacy of intervention in family crisis situations was an essential aspect of successful crisis intervention. In operational terms this means that when responding to a call concerning domestic violence the police officers in charge would, with the disputants permission, call in a member of the family consultant team to provide immediate crisis counselling and make appropriate agency referrals for post crisis support services. Research conducted on the London project (Thompson and Jaffe, 1979) has demonstrated that this type of immediate crisis intervention strategy increases the probability that those requiring such assistance will follow through on suggestions for post crisis follow-up treatment.

These results, as well as the hypothesized potency of immediate intervention noted in the mental health literature, prompted the Restigouche committee to adopt the London model for their own purposes. However, the wide dispersion of the area's population convinced the Citizen's Committee that although the principle of immediate intervention would be maintained, the use of payed professionals would not be financially feasible. In addition, it was felt that the use of payed professionals from the outside would not be appropriate given the rather closed nature of the region's rural communities. In recognition of these concerns, it was decided that each of the five police detachments within Restigouche County would be assigned a team of local lay volunteers trained in crisis intervention techniques. It is the aspect of the Restigouche project which fundamentally differs from the London model and at the same time makes it a rather unique innovation in terms of family crisis intervention generally.

In the spring of 1980, the Ministry of the Solicitor General granted demonstration funds to the Citizen's Committee for the establishment and operation of the Restigouche Family Crisis Interveners Project (R.F.C.I.). Shortly after Mr. Gérald Daigle, a criminologist by training, was hired as the project's full-time co-ordinator. After returning from on-site training with the London Family Consultant Service, Mr. Daigle went about the task of devising a resource inventory of helping agencies within Restigouche County.

Once completed this inventory contained the resources each agency could offer families in crisis as well as a contact person within each agency to whom referrals could be made. In addition to the resource inventory, the co-ordinator undertook to overcome another serious defficiency within the County, the establishment of emergency shelter facilities for battered women and their children. Once again the rural nature of Restigouche County demanded innovation. Instead of establishing a central shelter facility, private homes in each of the five policing areas were solicited for emergency shelter use.

Police referrals to the project began in September of 1980. At that time, volunteer interveners had not yet been hired and the project co-ordinator undertook the task of dispute intervention. Within a month however, volunteers were trained and assigned to each of the area's five police detachments. In its first year of operation, the project responded to 101 calls for assistance from local police.

In August of 1981 a researcher was hired. The role of this researcher was three fold:

1) To provide information useful in optimizing RFCI future operations.
2) To undertake a limited assessment of the project over a one year period.
3) To produce a document that would serve as a prescriptive package for those interested in exploring the possibility of developing a similar program in their community.

The first task has been completed through the submission of four previous progress reports. In these reports, data and observations on the project's day to day operations were presented along with recommendations concerning difficulties and changes to project procedures and policy. One concrete result of these efforts has been a comprehensive articulation of project objectives (to be discussed later). The remaining tasks of assessment and the dissemination of project experience to a greater or lesser extent forms the substance of this document. For the most part, the strategy for assessing the R.F.C.I. project consisted of designing and disseminating appropriate questionnaires to three distinct groups directly involved in the project's day to day operations - the police, the volunteer interveners and to the project's clients. The interviewing of volunteer interveners was conducted to learn more about their backgrounds, attitudes towards working with the police and other social agencies, as well as to document the approaches they have used in dealing with family crisis situations. The interviewing of police officers was expected to provide them with an opportunity to express their opinions about the project, its effectiveness and possibilities for positive change. Taken together the interviews with the police and the volunteers were also expected to inform project management about the attitudes and working relationships that had developed between the police and the volunteers over the last few years.

On the other hand, the interviewing of project clients was designed to provide consumer satisfaction information about the project and the services it offered. Additionally, this information coupled with data gleaned from police files on un-referred family crisis calls together would aid in answering questions concerning the frequency and the severity of domestic violence currently taking place in the Restigouche community.

In the remainder of this report I hope to offer the reader an insight into the R.F.C.I. project's organizational structure and daily operations. This insight will be augmented with detailed information concerning the clients served by the project and the volunteers employed to dispense the services consumed by these clients. Finally, issues concerning the police role in family intervention and questions dealing with the future of the R.F.C.I. project will be addressed. It is hoped this report will be of special benefit to those currently pondering the prospect of tackling the problem of domestic violence in their locality.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

In the previous section it was noted that a 25 member Citizen's Committee was initially responsible for the implementation and development of the RFCI project. During the first two and half years of the project's existance, this committee constituted the project's ultimate policy-making authority. Meeting every six months, the committee delegated the responsibility for the implementation of policy to a project steering committee consisting of five of its members. However, increasing project workload and difficulties inherent to the task of organizing attended meetings by twenty busy individuals made it apparent that a revision of the project's administrative structure was needed.

In the spring of 1983 a consensus of opinion favoured the dissolution of the Citizen's Committee in favour of the formation of a seven person board of directors. The formation of this board was the first step towards the eventual establishment of RFCI as a non-profit incorporated body. Two of the seven directors of the board have been elected to the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson respectively. The project co-ordinator, although not a voting member of the newly formed board, serves as Secretary-Treasurer. In addition to this role on the board, the co-ordinator is responsible for the organization and training of volunteer interveners and the establishment and maintenance of emergency shelter homes. Another non-voting member of the board is the research co-ordinator who is responsible for the evaluation and review of project policies and procedures as requested from time to time by the board. In addition to the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, the board consists of five voting members each of whom have been assigned the task of chairing one of five ongoing Sub-Committees. Each Sub-Committee Chairperson is encouraged to solicit the aid of two individuals outside of the board to help them in carrying out the function of their Sub-Committee. The five functions dealt with by these committees are by-law establishment and review, project funding and financial control, citizen liaison and public relations, staff development, and finally the review of medical/social issues impacting on the project's development and operations.

A chart of the project's administrative structure is presented in Appendix «A» (page 55).

In the fall of 1980, the Research Co-Ordinator distributed a questionnaire to the original twenty-five members of the project's Citizen's Committee. The questionnaire was designed to survey members on four areas of interest to the researcher:

1. Program objectives
2. Future difficulties facing the project
3. The project's information system
4. What would be expected of a project evaluation

I do not intend to give a full accounting of results except to mention that responses to questions dealing with topic two, three and four listed above were consistent among survey participants. However, analysis of responses to topic one concerning project objectives indicated a great deal of diversity among those responding. It was concluded that the diversity of responses noted indicated a lack of clarity and objective articulation of project objectives. This was noted in the first research report submitted to the committee along with a recommendation for action. A sub-committee was subsequently established to undertake the task of defining what the objectives of the project should be. The slate of objects eventually articulated by that sub-committee follows:

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

1. To provide to each of the five (5) police detachments in Restigouche County a team of trained interveners available 24 hours a day; seven days a week, to intervene in family crisis situations.
2. To provide, in rural setting, refuge for emotionally and physically abused women and children (accompanied by a guardian) and to other individuals who need immediate removal from their home to a safe place for a period of time (approximately seven-two (72) hours).
3. To maintain a Citizen's Committee comprised of members from all community services.

INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

4. To alleviate the suffering of family violence by offering to the victim(s) immediate emotional support at the time of the crisis.
5. To encourage families and family members engaged in violence to seek help voluntarily from human service agencies.
6. To shorten the gap between the time a crisis occurs and the time it takes to be seen by the agency while giving appropriate moral support during that period of time.
7. To increase the level of co-operation between existing community services dealing with families and individuals facing major difficulties.
8. To reduce the number of chronic callers phoning the police or the time before their next call.

ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES

9. To provide an ongoing service to the communities by increasing neighborhood cohesiveness.
10. To reduce the man hours the police must spend on quasi-criminal matters.
11. To reduce or contain actual physical violence and the threat of violence and to protect family members from harm, assault, and injury. Also, to reduce the incidence of homicide and suicide.
12. To raise the community's awareness to the problem of family violence by educating the public prior to a crisis developing e.g. through ongoing seminars aimed at general public.

As can be seen, the committee has divided project objectives into the categories of ultimate, intermediate and immediate. Ultimate objectives refer to what the project participants hope to achieve in the long run. Intermediate objectives denote the means used to successfuly accomplish the long term goals sought. Finally, immediate objectives represent a category which recognizes the basic building blocks required to implement the means chosen to accomplish the ultimate objectives identified. In essence these three levels of objectives can be viewed as forming a vertically intergrated means/ends chain in which human and material resources are organized in such a manner as to form certain courses of action thought appropriate to achieving valued results (Suchman, 1967).

To a great degree the early administration of the RFCI project depended upon the efforts of a five member steering committee. This committee met on a bi-weekly basis during the project's three year demonstration period. Provided with first hand experiences with the project's day by day operations by the co-ordinator and survey and file data by the researcher, the committee went about the tasks of adjusting project policies and overseeing the project's further development. In addition to monitoring the project's operations and development, this committee served another function which more than anything else contributed to the project's current success. Specifically, the committee served to keep the lines of communication open between the various agencies directly involved with the project as well as between the project and the wider community. This more or less latent function was exercised through a network of personal contacts maintained by committee members as well as through the seizure of every opportunity to expose RFCI to as large a segment of the Restigouche community as possible. Town counsels were addressed, local service club meetings were attended and local media were briefed on the goals and the functioning of the project on a continuing basis. It should be noted that these efforts were not in any way part of a grand educative strategy but flowed naturally from the enthusiasm and commitment that committee members had for the project and its goals.

However, planned or not these efforts were instrumental in awakening the Restigouche community to the severity of the problems dealt with by the project and also convey the message that these problems could be successfully addressed. It is unclear whether a more formal and planned approach to educating and informing the community would have been more potent in its results. Suffice it to say however, that community education eased the way for supporters of RFCI in securing the funds necessary to ensure its continued existance after federal demonstration funds had been exhausted. In a widely dispersed rural setting like Restigouche, support and acceptance of innovative social action can be jeapordized if key members of the community are not informed or in some way involved in the process of development.

In this section the formal and to a lesser extent informal aspects of the RFCI's administrative structure has been outlined. One aspect has not been mentionned, and that is how project participants determined to what extent project objectives were being met. This task was left to the researcher in collaboration with the research division of the Solicitor General's Secretariat from whom research funding had been granted. In essence it was decided that a «hard evaluation» aimed at measuring project activities against expected outcomes would be inappropriate given the constantly changing nature of the project's then current stage of development.

Instead the fundamental task of research would be to aid in the developmental process by providing feedback information from those implementing as well as those using the project's services. Although some of this feedback information has been touched upon, more will be intergrated in the following chapters.

PROJECT OPERATIONS

As indicated earlier, day to day operations are the responsibility of the project co-ordinator. This includes the recruitment, screening and training of volunteers, the monitoring of volunteer work and liaison with various social agencies including the police. In essence the co-ordinator's role consists of implementing and maintaining the policies and procedures formulated by the project's Board of Directors. What the co-ordinator oversees can best be summarized in the following description which attempts to outline key operational policies as they apply to the flow of cases processed by the project.

As indicated the primary source of clients for the project is by way of police referral. Although the project has on some occasions received referrals from other sources, it is project policy that all cases involving violence must be referred by the police officer(s) responding to the call. This policy helps ensure some degree of protection for the volunteers. Since the police arrive first, potential or ongoing violence is to a great extent diffused before a volunteer becomes involved.

Volunteers are available to the police on a twenty-four hour basis. Each volunteer team is responsible for devising its own on-call schedule. To ensure immediate police access, volunteers on call are required to carry a portable transmitter on their person at all times during their shift. Officers in need of volunteer assistance can call a paging service that will immediately forward the message to the volunteer on duty. To provide the police with advance information on which volunteer is available, an updated volunteer work schedule is regularly posted on the bulletin board in each detachment.

After arriving at the scene of a call, the volunteer is briefed by one of the officers present and is introduced by the officer to the disputants involved. The officer then observes the volunteer and the disputants interact for a period. If, in the opinion of the officer, the situation will not deteriorate into further violence, he/she may leave the scene to carry out other duties.

On the other hand, if the officer feels uneasy about leaving the volunteer alone, he/she will remain for as long as it is felt necessary. Typically, the officer usually leaves after a few minutes or so after the volunteer's arrival, calling back periodically to check on how the intervention is progressing.

During an intervention the task of a volunteer is to determine the underlying issues precipitating the conflict. This is accomplished by providing an unbiased and understanding ear to both participants in the dispute. In some instances, this is usually enough to resolve the crisis to the satisfaction of both disputants. If it is evident to the volunteer and disputants alike that further action is necessary, the volunteer will make a referral to an appropriate helping agency. Such referrals may involve a recontact of an agency with which the disputants have had contact before or, with an agency or institution with which the disputants have had no past contact. In either case, the volunteer is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate authorities are notified and appointments made.

As a matter of policy, volunteers are required to contact the disputants within three days of the initial intervention to see how they are making out and to offer any further assistance they may need in fulfilling the referral plan suggested to them. Except where warranted, further volunteer contact with disputants is discouraged.

The reason for this is to protect the volunteer from the burden of carrying an ongoing «case load» of clients. Project volunteers are trained for immediate crisis counselling and agency referral and are not trained in police work or long term therapeutic counselling. In other words, the project was devised as an aid to the police and other helping professionals and not as a replacement for them.

Between September first of 1980 and April 30th of 1983 the RFCI project handled 337 cases. A breakdown of these cases by type is presented on page 22, Table 1. As can be seen from this table, RFCI offers intervention and referrals services for a wide variety of crisis situations. Although initially conceived to deal explicity with crisis of a family nature, the project has received an array of referrals in which individuals and not families are the prime recipients. Cases involving mental illness, the deteriorating effects of sensibility or alcohol abuse, suicide attempts and individual needs for food and shelter provide some examples of such cases. In total these cases account for approximately 44.8% of the cases dealt with by interveners. Referrals to the project in which a juvenile was the primary focus of concern represented approximately 16% of the 337 cases received. For purposes of latter analysis, project volunteers were initially asked to place juvenile interventions into one of two sub-categories, cases of abuse or nelgect and cases of unmanageable behaviour.

However, this practice has been discontinued after November of 1981. Since that time no further referrals of child abuse cases have been received. The reason for this is that a change in provincial legislation compels the police, or anyone else for that matter, to refer all cases of child abuse or neglect directly to the Department of Social Services. In essence this has eliminated the intervention by RFCI volunteers in such cases. This legislation does not, however, interfere with project intervention into cases involving juvenile misbehaviour.

Although juvenile cases and cases categorized as «other» represents a sizeable portion of the project's case load (approximately 61%), it is cases involving domestic disputes that tend to take up most of the volunteer's time and efforts. Domestic disputes (that is cases involving fights between couples whether legally married or not) have accounted for nearly 40% of the project's work load. In terms of domestic disputes processed approximately 80% of the couples lived together, while 20% of the disputes involved individuals living apart.

TYPE OF FAMILY CRISIS

Table 1

Type	# of cases	Percent
Domestic dispute	132	39.17
Problem re: youth (behaviour)	54	16.02
Fight with family member	16	4.75
Alcohol and drug addiction	23	6.82
Emotional problem	21	6.23
Suicide tendency and attempt	18	5.34
Death and dying	4	1.19
Need for food or shelter	31	9.20
Fear violence	15	4.45
Sexual assault	7	2.08
Advice only	16	4.75
TOTAL:	337	100.00

DISPOSITIONS OF CASES

Table 2

Disposition	# of cases	Percent
Mediation alone	105	31.17
Psychiatric referral	15	4.45
Hospital emergency	76	22.55
Emergency sheltered home	39	11.57
Recontact of agency	77	22.85
Detention	13	3.85
Unmotivated	12	3.56
TOTAL:	337	100.00

In terms of providing assistance to clients, volunteers have a number of options available. In Table 2 we can see volunteers were able to ensure crisis resolution in approximately thirty-one percent (31.17%) of cases through mediation alone. Similarly, assistance by way of recontacting an agency previously involved with a particular family took place in twenty-two percent (22.85%) of project interventions. Resolution of crisis through the provision of immediate emergency shelter took place in 39 cases or approximately eleven percent (11.5%) of the time. As might be expected, the majority of emergency shelter referrals involved women victimized during a domestic dispute. An analysis of data provided by Maison Notre-Dame, the main shelter facility used by the project, indicates that most of these women were accompanied by two or more children at the time of admittance.

In Table 2 it can be seen that in approximately three percent (3.56%) of cases, the individuals involved were so unmotivated that a volunteer could not bring an intervention to a satisfactory conclusion. Many of these latter cases reflect a resistance of help by those with a long term history of alcohol abuse. In any event, this rather low figure speaks well for the project's attempt to overcome the closed and private nature of rural communities, initially feared to be an obstacle to the project.

Although the establishment and development of the RFCI project owes a great deal to the hard work and enthusiasm of the Citizen's Committee and the project Co-Ordinator, it is my observation that the dedication of the volunteers to the task of helping those in crisis has been the essential ingredient in project's successful functioning to date. With this in mind, I would like to now turn to describing in some detail the role, the training, the background and the feelings of the volunteers towards the project generally.

THE VOLUNTEERS

In this section I intend to discuss the selection, training and the attitudes of the RFCI's main instrument of crisis intervention, the project's volunteer interveners. While working with these individuals over the last two years, it is apparent to me that a great deal of the project's success can be attributed to their enthusiasm and honesty.

The screening of volunteers is conducted by the Program Co-Ordinator, a member of the Steering Committee and the Officer commanding the Detachment to which a potential intervener may be assigned. To date the project has depended upon the endorsement of Citizen Committee members, in most cases a police officer, for the selection of candidates to be interviewed.

This process has in the past been effective in locating individuals possessing the characteristics thought to be essential for the task of crisis intervention (empathetic, resourceful, a good listener, tactful, responsible, and genuinely interested in the project's goals).

If successfully screened by the Selection Committee, the new volunteer is provided with four types of training. The first type is intensive in nature and consists of a two day workshop attended by not only volunteers but police officers and representatives from some of the key helping agencies to which project referrals are made. Such workshops occur every six months and all volunteer interveners, whether new to the program or not, are asked to attend.

A second type of training offered to volunteers consists of «on the job training» in which the Program Co-Ordinator accompanies the volunteer on initial calls. During the first few calls, the volunteer undertakes a passive role and observes the Program Co-Ordinator handle the intervention. On subsequent calls the volunteer takes a more active role in the intervention while the Co-Ordinator stands back and observes the volunteer in action. After completion of such calls, the Co-Ordinator provides positive feedback to the volunteer on his/her performance. Such training offers professional guidance to the volunteer and provides the Co-Ordinator with first-hand knowledge of the volunteer's strengths as well as the identification of areas where the volunteer's intervention skills could be improved.

The third kind of training provided to interveners is ongoing in nature. Each month a meeting chaired by the Co-Ordinator is conducted in the five police areas served by the project. At such meetings police officers and volunteers discuss the progress of each case referred that month. These meetings provide additional feedback to the volunteers on their intervention skills and also supplies the police with up-to-date information on how each case has been resolved. In addition to further training volunteers, such meetings have tended to build confidence and respect between the police and the volunteers assigned to a particular area.

The final type of training offered to the volunteer is more personalized in nature. Over the course of the project's development, the Program Co-Ordinator has gathered together a large and comprehensive resource library of books and articles dealing with the areas of crisis management and domestic violence. Volunteers, police and members of the community at large are encouraged to utilize this resource to further broaden their knowledge concerning crisis intervention. To date the library has been well used by both volunteers and police officers alike. In the future, it is hoped that the resource will serve as a valuable tool in not only training staff but also in furthering project plans to offer an education service to the community as a whole on the issues surrounding violence within the family.

To learn more about the volunteers and their attitudes towards their role and RFCI in general, a questionnaire was circulated to all RFCI volunteers whether currently active or not. Out of a total of 20 volunteers, 14 were surveyed.

Of the 14 volunteers surveyed, ten were female and four were male. Although the volunteers ranged in age from 26 to 55, the mean age was calculated as being 38.8 years. In terms of prior training relevant to the role as interveners, three indicated professional involvement, four non-professional training and seven stated they had no prior training at all. The number of RFCI interventions handled by individual volunteers ranged from one to 69 with a mean of 25 cases. Nine of the volunteers surveyed had full-time employment, two indicated part-time jobs and the remaining two volunteers stated that they were housepersons.

In addition to the above background information, the volunteers were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the training provided to them by the project. In all 13 were completely or somewhat satisfied with the training they recieved. One volunteer indicated complete dissatisfaction with the training and one individual took a neutral position regarding this survey item. As noted earlier, one of the reasons for only accepting cases directly referred by the police is to give the volunteer some advanced information concerning a crisis situation prior to arriving on the scene.

When asked whether this aspect of the policy was useful, 11 of the 14 volunteers surveyed indicated that the advance police information provided adequately prepared them for what they were about to face. As before, one volunteer totally disagreed with the majority while one other remained neutral.

To date no volunteer has been physically injured as a result of intervening in a family crisis situation. However, when surveyed ten of the volunteers did indicate they have on some occasions felt uneasy about their physical well being when intervening. Three volunteers expressed never feeling threatened and one did not respond to the question. In addition to the stress associated with the fear of physical threat, the volunteers are committing themselves to a work schedule that demands a great deal of sacrifice in terms of their personal lives. When asked to indicate the extent of such interference, two revealed this was true to a great degree, seven indicated some interference and five felt that their personal lives were not disrupted at all.

Fear of being hurt and commitment to a rather disruptive work schedule are not obstacles most of us face when we volunteer to help others in our communities. To the extent that these aspects are of concern to RFCI volunteers, one wonders what motivates them to continue in their role as interveners. When asked why they got involved with the RFCI project in the first place, a majority of the volunteers indicated a deep seated desire to help families in crisis.

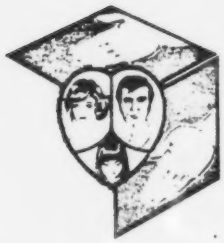
Given the nature of volunteerism, in general such a response would not seem unusual. However, it is the researcher's opinion that there is a dimension in the background of a majority of RFCI volunteers which may account for their enthusiasm with their role as RFCI interveners. When surveyed, half of the volunteers revealed that they themselves had been past participants in spouse abuse situations. Two of the remaining volunteers indicated being victims of child abuse and alcoholism respectively. In other words, most of the volunteers were dealing with situations that they themselves had direct personal experience with. From discussions with the volunteers, I have observed that many of them feel their own experiences with crisis provides them with special insights into the plights of those with which they deal in their role as interveners.

Although in the next section I will be discussing client satisfaction with the project, the success of the interveners in achieving the goals of the project has not yet been adequately measured. However, the views of the volunteers as to their own effectiveness appear to be favourable. When asked to rate their performance, 11 out of the 14 volunteers interviewed indicated success in resolving family crisis situations in a majority of the cases they have dealt with. While no volunteer report total failure, three did indicate that they were successful in only a handful of cases. These results do not pretend to offer support for claims of project effectiveness.

What they do indicate, though, is a clear indication that the volunteers themselves feel their efforts are of significant benefit to those they counsel.

Besides feeling good about their own involvement in the RFCI project, the volunteers also indicated positive feelings towards their dealings with the police and the other social agencies with which they must interact. Although a few agencies were identified as troublesome by individual volunteers in general, there was no overall negative consensus about a specific agency. In a word, the volunteers were satisfied not only with their own performance but also with the performance of the project's other main participants.

In the next section I intend to introduce results of a survey conducted with some of the RFCI project's former clients. This analysis, though limited in scope, will give at least a crude indication as how project clients feel about the service RFCI has provided them. In addition to information about RFCI clients, I will also give a limited presentation of data gathered from police files covering an 18 month period. This later information was initially gathered to determine the extent to which police were not referring cases fitting RFCI's criteria for intervention. Although this later issue will be briefly touched upon, the information presented will also serve as background data about the incidence of individual and family crisis within the Restigouche area generally.



THE CLIENTS

In fall of 1982, the researcher and the Steering Committee decided to investigate the extent of police usage of the services provided by RFCI. To this end, permission was secured to examine police files in order to identify all calls that fell within the project's conceived target population over an 18 month period (September 1, 1980 to April 30, 1982).

For purposes of comparison, the police calls were divided into three categories: Domestic Disputes, Juvenile and Other. The first category, Domestic Disputes, refers to all calls received in which a couple, whether living common-law or legally married, were involved in a dispute in which the use or threatened use of violence prompted one of the disputants (or someone else) to call the police for reasons of safety.

The term Juvenile refers to all calls involving a person under the age of sixteen who was abused or neglected, or who was causing a disturbance within the home of such an extent that a family member felt it necessary to seek police assistance. The label «Other» identifies a more or less miscellaneous category of assistance calls for a variety of matters including attempted suicide, alcohol or drug abuse and requests for temporary shelter, only to name a few examples. These three categories are the same ones used by the volunteers when completing their call reports and together represent the RFCI's target population.

Out of 1000 or so police files searched, 290 calls fitted the project's criteria for volunteer involvement. Overall such incidents were received by the police at a rate of 7.1 calls per 1000 population. A breakdown of these calls by type is presented in Table 3. A similar tabulation of cases received by RFCI over the same period of time is contained in Table 4. It should be mentionned that of the 196 cases represented in this latter table, 26 were self-referrals. In other words the police did not refer 117 calls fitting the project's criteria for volunteer intervention over the time period in question. Although the underlying reasons for this discrepancy are still unclear, the data does indicate that the rate of referring cases to the project varies depending upon which of the five police detachments in the area is examined.

Additionally, although it is possible that further research of this issue could be of some benefit, a trend analysis over time comparing police calls received to calls referred revealed that the rate of police referrals to RFCI had increased steadily over the twenty month period examined. In any event, the above figures do give some indication as to the volume of calls received by the police and indirectly the size of RFCI's target population.

POLICE CALLS - SEPTEMBER 1980 TO APRIL 1982

Table 3

TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Domestic Dispute	147	40.69
Juvenile	35	12.07
Other	108	37.24
TOTAL	290	100.00

RFCI CASES SEPTEMBER 1980 TO APRIL 1982

Table 4

TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Domestic Dispute	76	38.78
Juvenile	34	17.35
Other	86	43.87
TOTAL	196	100.00

The problem of adequately reaching a target population, though important, is not as crucial as determining whether a planned intervention strategy is effective in its results. This issue is traditionally resolved by applying scientific methods during the course of a rigorous program evaluation. As stated earlier in this document, the decision not to conduct such an evaluation was based on the notion that: given RFCI's evolving and ever changing stage of development such an evaluation would not only be unfair but also increase the likelihood of producing invalid results (see Suchman, 1967 and Rutman, 1979). However, even though a rigorous evaluation of RFCI was rejected, it was still felt that some form of project «assessment» would be useful. As a result, those involved in researching the project supported the idea of conducting a consumer satisfaction survey of the project's former clients. To this end a questionnaire was designed containing items aimed at providing RFCI clients with an opportunity to describe their situation as well as express their opinions about the quality and effectiveness of the services they received from the police, the volunteers and the other helping agencies to which they may have been referred. For purposes of comparison, a part of the survey instrument would also be used in interviewing those who fit the project's criteria for intervention, but for what ever reason, were not referred to the project by the police.

Given that identification of non-referred police calls had already been obtained from the file search mentionned above the period beginning September 1, 1980 and ending April 30, 1982 was chosen as the unit of time to be examined for the survey. Also, due to the rural and wide spread nature of Restigouche County, it was decided that for practical and economic reasons the survey would be conducted by telephone. The survey was begun in early 1983.

Unfortunately, the results of the above described survey turned out to be somewhat disappointing. The reason for this is that only a small number of RFCI clients were eventually questionned. Part of the reason for this is that early on, in the surveying process, it was decided that due to the large sample size and given that current interest lay more with domestic disputes than with the other categories of RFCI cases, only clients classified as victims of domestic disputes would be surveyed. Although this latter decision seemed innocuous at the time, it did contribute to a lessening of the number of RFCI candidates for the survey. What was not anticipated was that a large number of domestic dispute clients could not be contacted (moved with no forwarding address or phone number) and of those that were contacted, a large proportion refused to be interviewed. The bottom line is that out of a potential sample of 53 RFCI domestic dispute cases (76 calls minus 23 repeat calls), 27 could not be reached and 19 of the 26 who were contacted refused to be interviewed (nearly all those who refused stated fear of what their spouse might think as their reason for refusing).

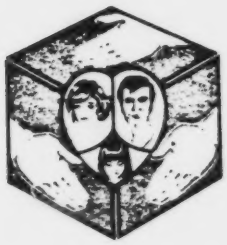
In other words, only seven RFCI domestic dispute cases were eventually surveyed. Obviously this small sampling of client opinion cannot be generalized very far. It is for this reason that an additional six non-domestic dispute cases (gathered prior to the decision to concentrate on domestic cases only) will be combined in the results to be discussed.

Generally speaking of the 13 RFCI clients surveyed, nearly all felt that the services they received from RFCI had some degree of positive impact on their lives. In fact only one individual felt that the experience with RFCI had no positive impact on her crisis situation. When asked whether their situation had improved since the crisis incidence occurred, eight indicated it had gotten much better, four stated it had become somewhat better and one indicated no change at all. Of the 12 who indicated improvement, six felt it was a very great extent attributable to the intervention of RFCI and the remaining six said it was to some extent the result of RFCI efforts. When asked if they would recommend the services of RFCI to a close friend, 12 said that they would while one stated that she would not. Additionally, when surveyed as to who in their opinion provided the most help at the time of crisis, seven said RFCI did, four indicated the police and the remaining two individuals respectively identified a friend and an unnamed social agency. Finally, when asked to rate their agreement with the statement that the RFCI volunteer was good listener, six strongly agreed with the statement, four somewhat agreed, one somewhat disagreed and two totally disagreed.

The sample surveyed above is small. However, it is evident that although few in number, the majority of those interviewed were not only satisfied with the service provided by RFCI but have attributed the project's intervention with some degree of responsibility for whatever positive changes have taken place to improve or resolve the crisis they have faced.

As noted above, the survey of RFCI clients was partly motivated by an interest in learning more about the frequency and severity of domestic violence in the area served by the project. To some extent this motivation was fulfilled. It will be remembered that through the use of police records victims of domestic violence, but not referred to RFCI, were also interviewed. In all 25 such interviews took place. By combining this number with the seven RFCI domestic dispute cases, a sample of 32 completed interviews was obtained.

It appears that the typical female victim of domestic violence within Restigouche County is on average 38 years of age, has been married to her spouse for approximately 16 years, and has a household consisting of three children ranging between 12 and 13 years of age. The age of the women being battered shows a great deal of variability. A significant portion, however, were between the ages of 35 and 45. Many of these women had lived with their abusive partners for more than ten years.



THE POLICE

At the time of the crisis incident, approximately half of the victims had a source of income seperate from their spouse. On the other hand, 65% of the battering males had fulltime employment while the remainder were receiving one form of public assistance or another (typically U.I.C.). The victims spouse was on average two years older and had one year less of formal education (grade nine being the main grade level achieved).

Approximately 78% of the victims interviewed indicated that prior to the incident in question they and their spouse had had frequent disputes. All of the victims indicated being harmed or physically threatened on those previous occasions. When asked about the incident in question, 15 out of 32 of the women reported being physically assaulted by their spouses. Of the remaining 17 women, 14 stated that they were verbally threatened with violence while three indicated that their spouse had damaged their marital property. Twenty-four (24) of the victims, or 75%, believed that alcohol abuse had contributed to their spouses violent behaviour. During disputes with their spouses, the majority of those responding feared not only for their own safety but also for the safety of their children. Since the battering incident in question, 16 of those battered indicated that there has been a change in their marital status (separation or divorce).

In 17 of the dispute cases surveyed, it was indicated that the person being battered called the police for assistance.

In the remaining disputes, police were informed from either neighbours, friends or a relative. Approximately 70% of the victims felt the police were quick enough in coming to their rescue. Only two out of the 32 women surveyed felt that the police favoured their battering spouse in terms of support and encouragement. In general the victims found the police responsive, sympathetic and helpful.

It appears from the above paragraph that the police are, for the most part, viewed positively by the abused women interviewed. In the next section I intend to present data concerning the background, the attitudes and the views of the police concerning RFCI and wife battering in general.

The RFCI project, as the reader may have already guessed, is designed to be of direct aid to local police. In practical terms this assistance is extended to the five detachments serving the Restigouche area. Two of these police detachments serve the more or less urban areas of Campbellton City and the Town of Dalhousie, while the remaining three serve the unincorporated rural areas and small communities surrounding these two major centres. In all approximately 40 officers are involved in policing the county's 40,000 or so inhabitants. In this section I intend to discuss the interface between the police and RFCI and to some extent reveal the degree to which police in Restigouche County have been satisfied with the services provided to them by RFCI and its volunteer interveners.

It has been determined (from area police files) that in an 18 month period, beginning September 1, 1980 and ending April 30th, 1981, 290 calls were received by the police which fit RFCI's criteria for intervention. Of this number, it was calculated that 40% (117) were not referred to the project although to do so would have been appropriate according to RFCI guidelines. The reasons for this rather large rate of non-referral are still as yet unknown. An examination of cases over time, however, indicates that many of the non-referred cases identified were concentrated in the project's first year of operations. In other words one could surmise that the problem of police co-operation may have been the result of the initial caution the police may have had towards the project and its volunteer interveners. However, whatever the reasons for this early hesitation to refer, many area police currently hold positive opinions about the project, its volunteer and its goals. This conclusion is based on the results of a questionnaire that was circulated to 38 police officers currently serving in Restigouche County. Without going into great detail, the results of this survey revealed the following:

1) That on average each officer has used the services of RFCI five or more times over the last three years.
2) That approximately 94% of the officers surveyed believe that using RFCI reduces the amount of police time spent on individual domestic dispute calls.

3) That 94% of the officers using RFCI believe that the use of the project has reduced the frequency of repeat calls from disputing couples.
4) That a significant majority of the officers surveyed have confidence in the abilities of project volunteers and the effectiveness of the project generally.

The reader should be cautionned that the above summary is derived from a survey of police opinion and not from the application of direct measures to project activities and their resultant effects. In any event these results do support the conclusion that area police are satisfied with the support services provided to them by the project and its volunteer interveners.

Although, as noted earlier, RFCI was primarily designed to aid the police in dealing with family and domestic crisis situations, their support and co-operation has not been left to chance. Those administrating the project realized that, to ensure police co-operation in referring clients, a concerted effort would have to be made to involve the police in the ongoing development of project policies and procedures. This intent was put into practice by maintaining a police present on the Citizen's Committee as well as the various sub-committees that were formed to steer the project's development over time. At the operational level, police officers have been directly involved in the tasks of screening and selecting project volunteers.

In fact in many cases, it has been a police officer who has offered the name of a potential volunteer candidate to the local selection committee.

Project development and volunteer selection have not been the only means of ensuring police involvement in RFCI. Under the chairmanship of the project co-ordinator, monthly meetings in each of the five areas served by the project are conducted in which local police and volunteers have an opportunity to discuss current cases and to provide each other with constructive criticism about their performance. This process has to a large extent helped to quickly identify problems and has facilitated the growth of trust between the police and the volunteers.

Monthly meetings have not been the only mechanism used to encourage trust and input on the part of the police. Police involvement in the volunteer training workshops noted in the previous section has also been encouraged. This involvement has enabled police officers to view first hand the training given volunteers as well as an opportunity for them to share their experience and their opinions on a variety of topics pertaining to family crisis and domestic violence. Recently, the role of the police in these workshops has been expanded to include the participation of officers specifically trained in domestic dispute intervention. From the volunteer's point of view, this additional training has helped them to understand police concerns and the approach officers use in coping with domestic dispute situations.

In conversation with many of the areas' police officers over the last two years, it became apparent to me in general they view their primary role in domestic dispute situations as one of diffusing - immediate situational violence. A review of some of the results, derived from the client satisfaction survey mentionned earlier, indicates that in many instances the victims of domestic violence view the role of the police in a similar manner. In general, when victims were asked how satisfied they were with the way the police handled their crisis situation, approximately 72% of those responding expressed satisfaction with what the police had done even though in many cases this amounted to little more than diffusing the immediate threat of violence.

The option of charging in domestic dispute situations appears to have been sparingly used by the police over an 18 month period, only in 14 cases were charges laid. It is interesting to note, however, that only four of the 38 dispute victims interviewed identified lack of police support as the primary reason they did not chose to have a charge laid against their spouse. In fact, in our survey of police opinion, a majority were in favour of laying charges in domestic dispute cases if reasonable and probable grounds existed for doing so.

The above discussion has focused on the mechanisms used by RFCI to facilitate trust and input on the part of the police. Before concluding, I would like to briefly expand on the procedures and policies followed by the police in referring cases to RFCI volunteers.

In essence this topic can be reduced to providing answers to the questions of: a) who gets referred and, b) how are referrals made?

The criteria used by the police in deciding who should be referred to RFCI are to some extent loosely defined. In practice it has been clearly understood that all incidents of domestic violence brought to police attention qualify for RFCI intervention. When questionned 81% of the policemen surveyed agreed with this understanding. The remainder, however, gave examples of situations in which they feel RFCI referral would be inappropriate (presence of firearms, etc). As yet, RFCI administration has not clearly articulated in what situations referrals in domestic dispute cases should not be made. Instead police discretion has been depended upon when ambiguous situations have arisen.

As noted earlier, RFCI deals with more than domestic disputes in its day-to-day operation. Cases involving suicide attempts, alcoholism and juvenile misbehaviour (to name only a few) all fall within the project's self-defined mandate of providing intervention services to families in crisis. This is the case even when the presence of domestic violence between spouses is not a source of concern or for that matter even pertinent to the situation at hand. Once again police discretion is operative and expected in deciding which cases will or will not be referred.

Although RFCI's administration supports the use of individual police discretion in making referrals, there are no set guidelines established to aid officers in the exercise of this discretion. It is unclear at this point whether stringent referral guidelines are needed or are even wanted by the police. However, anyone interested in establishing a project similar to RFCI will have to undertake the task of establishing police referral criteria and the extent to which police discretion will be allowed to interfere with the application of such criteria.

As a matter of policy, RFCI has insisted that volunteers should not accept referrals in cases involving domestic violence unless such referrals are made directly from a police officer present at the scene. In operational terms, this policy is aimed at preventing the practice of having a police dispatcher refer a domestic dispute case directly to a volunteer without prior police involvement. This policy was instituted so that volunteers would be provided with some degree of protection from potential harm as well as to provide them with some first hand information as to what they could expect once they arrived at the crisis scene. It is suggested that such a policy should be followed in any jurisdiction considering implementation of the RFCI model. Without the diffusing of violence by the police prior to referral, volunteers would be unnecessarily exposed to potential harm.

In this section I have described the extent of police satisfaction with RFCI as well as the means that have used to encourage police input and co-operation in the project's development and day-to-day operation. Additionally, issues and practices revolving around the referral of cases by the police to RFCI have been briefly discussed. In the next section, I will attempt to summarize the key points discussed this far and to conclude this document with some discussion of the project's future in light of recent trends in social policy and attitudes towards the problem of domestic violence.

UNITE D'INTERVENTION POUR CRISES FAMILIALES DE RESTIGOUCHE
RESTIGOUCHE FAMILY CRISIS INTERVENTION

CONCLUSION

In this document, I have attempted to provide material that would give a fair description of the structure, operations and development of the Restigouche Family Crisis Interveners Project. In addition, I have attempted to present data indicating the degree of satisfaction clients and key participants had with the project and the services it has provided over the last three years. My aim, as stated in the introduction, was to give those interested enough background and practical information to be of some assistance in the establishment of a similar project in their community. I hope this task has been accomplished.

The RFCI project is, when compared with other domestic dispute programs currently operating in Canada, a unique and innovative attempt to adapt accepted intervention principles in a more or less widely dispersed rural area. The use of lay volunteers in the process of domestic dispute intervention should be applauded for not only its uniqueness but also for its applicability to the tight economic restraints now facing communities interested in dealing effectively with the difficult problems of domestic violence and abuse.

Although from its inception, RFCI has operated from within a formal structure a great deal of its development and acceptance with the Restigouche area can be attributable to the enthusiasm of its proponents, and their utilization of personal and informal means to educate and involve members of the wider community. In hindsight, it is difficult to assess the extent that this enthusiasm and personal touch has had in the project's eventual acceptance as a viable means to deal with domestic violence. In any event those interested in establishing such a project within a rural community should, perhaps, seriously include these considerations in their initial program planning.

As indicated in the body of this report, the volunteers, the police, as well as the projects' clients have all expressed satisfaction with the project and the services it has provided. Granted project effectiveness cannot be properly evaluated on the basis of satisfaction alone.

On the other hand, the application of rigorous outcome methodology was in the case of RFCI felt to be inappropriate given its then current state of development. The role of research in regards to RFCI has been «formative» in nature. The intent was to provide a research results that would be of aid to administrators in developing the project to its fullest potential and to lay the foundation upon which a hard evaluation could eventually be based.

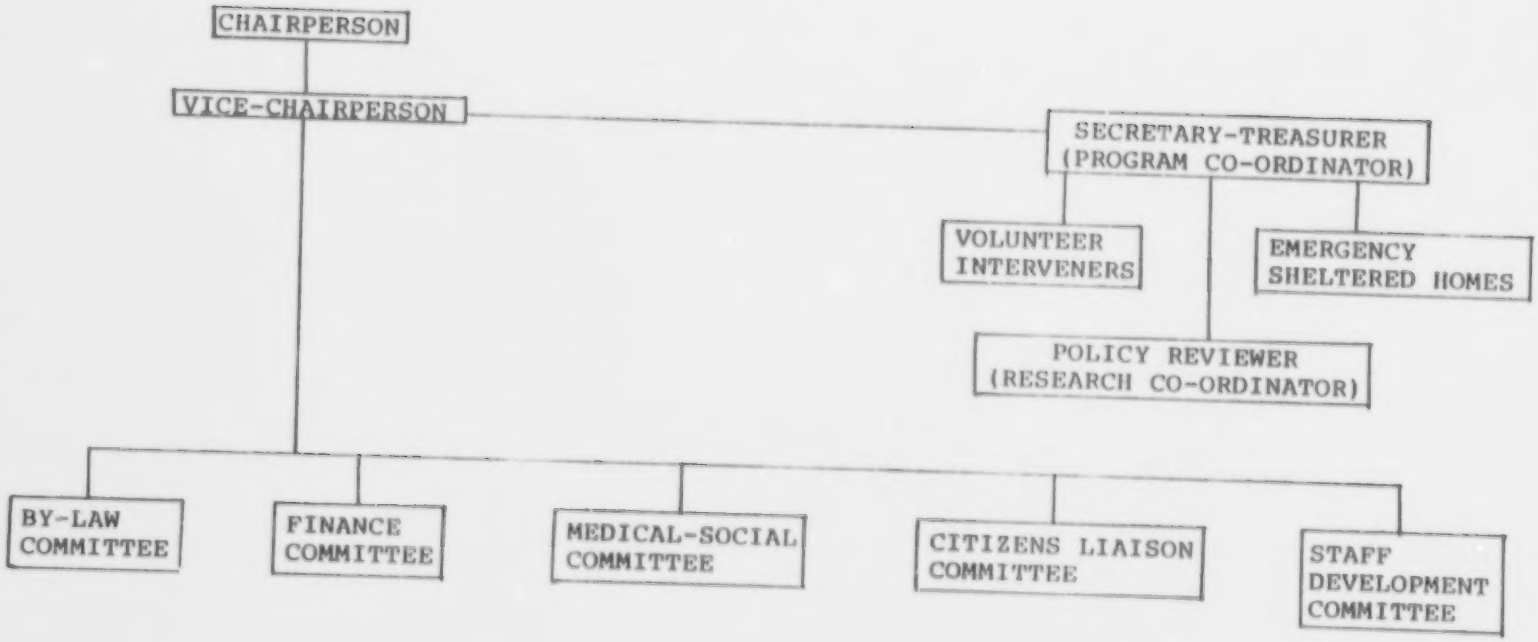
Before concluding, I would like to examine RFCI in light of current trends in social policy. There is growing support for the position that police should lay charges in domestic dispute cases whenever there are reasonable and probable grounds for doing so and whether or not the female victim wishes a charge laid or not. In other words, the burden of charging in domestic disputes would be removed from the shoulders of those being battered and placed upon the shoulders of law enforcement officials. Under such a policy, women would no longer have to fear retaliation from their spouses as a consequence of testifying against them in a court of law. On the face of it, such a policy would to some extent be contradictory to the RFCI philosophy of resolving domestic crisis by helping the participants deal with the underlying problems or issues contributing to their crisis situation. Obviously if the abusing party is charged and detained, the mediation process is to some extent jeapordized. In fact, however, this fear may be unfounded.

If the policy of charging is also coupled with a policy that encourages the court to sentence the abusing spouse to an appropriate treatment regime, then the mediation role of RFCI could be a useful means to support such a regime once it has been established. In any case the role of RFCI, as a support service to the victim of domestic violence, would not in any way be disturbed by the adoption of a non-discretionary charging policy on the part of the police. Whether the problems giving rise to violence in a specific relationship are addressed or not, RFCI volunteers still undertake to provide support and assistance to those who have been victimized.

APPENDIX «A»

R.F.C.I. OPERATIONAL ORGANIGRAM

(AS OF JUNE 1ST 1983)



PART II

TECHNICAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Restigouche Family Crisis Interveners project (RFCI), located in Northern New Brunswick, is an innovative attempt at providing police officers with help in dealing more effectively with calls concerning family crisis situations. In operational terms this help consists of providing trained volunteers, selected from the local community, to aid the police on a twenty-four hour basis. Upon the request of a police officer responding to a domestic crisis call, the volunteer on duty will attempt to mediate between those in conflict or, where applicable, ensure that those victimized by domestic or family violence receive refuge and support. If necessary, and with the approval of those involved, volunteer interveners will make appropriate referrals to helping agencies equipped to provide treatment or to otherwise aid those being referred.

Part II of this document contains detailed results of research conducted on the Restigouche Family Crisis Interveners Project (RFCI) over a two year period (1981-1983). It will not be dealing in great detail with the project's administrative or operational structures which have been described in Part I. The first part of this report did not contain a great deal of technical information, and would be of use to those wanting a summary introduction to the history, development and operations of RFCI over the last three years. In contrast, Part II provides a detailed description of the research program implemented by RFCI along with a detailed accounting of the results accumulated to date.

A research component was added to RFCI in the fall of 1981. The purpose of this component was three fold:

1) To implement a strategy for optimizing the project's ongoing operations.

2) To provide a limited assessment of the project's performance over a specified period of time.

3) To produce a comprehensive document that could serve as a prescriptive package for those interested in exploring the possibility of developing a project similar to RFCI in their community.

In essence the implementation of a strategy for project optimization is evidenced in the various progress reports submitted to the Citizen's Committee over the last two years. The second and third aims of the research are embodied in this and the companion document cited above. It should be noted that the term «limited assessment» should not confuse the reader into thinking that a hard outcome-oriented evaluation of RFCI has taken place. In fact the underlying purpose of the RFCI research agenda has been formative rather than evaluative in nature. In other words, research would aid RFCI administrators in the further development and refinement of project operations and not be construed as a means of yielding pronouncements concerning the project's success or failure in reaching predefined goals.

The decision to conduct formative as opposed to evaluative research arose from considerations concerning the project's then current stage of development. In general, at least three preconditions have to exist before an evaluation research can proceed:

1) That the expected effects and objectives of the program are clearly understood;
2) That the activity structure of the program is clearly defined;
3) That there exist plausible causual assumptions linking program activities to program effects.[1]

To establish the existence of the above pre-conditions, in the fall of 1981 project documents were examined and key project participants were interviewed. In addition, an evaluability questionnaire consisting of nine items was distributed to the 25 member Citizen's Committee responsible for the project's administration and development. This questionnaire was devised to solicit opinions on three crucial topics:

1) project objectives;

2) future difficulties facing the project; and

3) the program's present information needs.

An analysis of questionnaire results yielded the following. First, most of those interviewed felt that program funding would be the main difficulty facing the program in the future. Second, that if the program was to resolve the problem of future funding, a major effort would have to be made to more adequately inform local residents of the program's existence and underlying purpose. Thirdly, that all respondents were satisfied with the program's existing information systems (annual and progress reporting, committee meetings and monthly bulletin).

The responses to questions dealing with Topic one, concerning a statement of program objectives, requires separate discussion.

A list of responses to the question dealing with program objectives was compiled. A frequency count of similar responses revealed a great deal of diversity among those questioned. As pointed out in the evaluation literature, programs can be viewed from various points in the vertically organized means/ends chain which constitutes a particular program structure.[2] The diversity noted seems to reflect the various vantage points assumed by those questioned. However, no matter how one interprets such results the fact remains, that as far as project objectives were concerned, there was a lack of clarity and concrete articulation. This meant that a fundamental precondition for program evaluation and development was absent. This coupled with the finding that only cursory consideration had been given to defining clearly the casual assumptions linking program activities to expected effects, prompted the decision to institute a formative as opposed to an evaluative research strategy.

In a progress report submitted in November of 1981 a formative research strategy was outlined consisting of the following six initiatives:

1) A restructuring of the project's call report system to ensure a more reliable and pertinent reporting of volunteer activities;

2) the establishment of a committee to tackle the task of identifying and articulating a clear set of project objectives;

3) the development and implementation of a survey aimed at measuring the degree to which project clients have been satisfied with the service provided to them by the project;

4) a survey of police attitudes towards domestic disputes and RFCI's ability to deal effectively with them;

5) to interview project interveners in order to gain an insight into their background, their motivation for volunteering and their opinions regarding their effectiveness in dealing with domestic dispute situations; and

6) to examine police files in order to determine the frequency, distribution and nature of domestic dispute calls being received by the police whether referred to RFCI or not.

This report presents the results of the following initiatives:

First: data gathered from police files will be presented. This information will be compared with similar information gathered from program call reports. Taken together these two sets of data will help inform the reader about RFCI's target population and the extent to which the project has been successful in reaching it.

Secondly: results gathered from a client satisfaction survey will be examined. These results, with some qualification, will give some indication of how RFCI has performed from the client's point of view.

Thirdly: the results of a questionnaire completed by project volunteers will be discussed. This should provide some insight into the background, attitudes and motivation of those most directly involved in the delivery of project services.

Finally: data obtained from a survey conducted on area police will be presented. This information will provide an indication of how police officers evaluate the project and, to a limited extent, will reveal their attitudes regarding various issues related to domestic violence generally.

In the pages that follow limitations of the data gathered will be noted and difficulties that arose during the research will be discussed.

THE TARGET POPULATION

Soon after research began on RFCI, it became apparent that previous statements made about the size and nature of the project's target population were based more on estimates than upon data gathered from objective sources. Additionally, there was concern that the police were not referring cases in the numbers initially expected. It was unclear whether this was due to distrust, lack of knowledge about the project's screening criteria or simply due to an over estimation in the volume of cases. Therefore, a search of police files was conducted. This search was devised in such a manner as to identify all family crisis calls responded to by the police which fit the RFCI's criteria for intervention. In essence the criteria used by RFCI consists of placing calls into three categories: domestic disputes, juvenile cases and «other».

The term domestic dispute refers to all cases involving a couple, whether legally married or not, in which violence or the threat of violence prompted one of the disputants (or someone else) to call the police for assistance. Juvenile cases are defined as all calls involving a young adult (16-20 years old), who was either abused, or who was causing a disturbance to such an extent that a family member felt it necessary to seek police assistance. Cases placed in the category «other» refer to a varied collection of incidence including reported cases of attempted suicide, alcohol or drug abuse and requests by transients for food and/or shelter, only to name a few. In effect all cases referred to RFCI which did not fit easily into the remaining two categories were classified as «other».

In all, over 1000 police files were searched for the twenty month period beginning on September 1st 1980 and ending on April 30th 1982. Of this number 290 calls fit the criteria for referral established by RFCI for the police. During this same period 196 cases in total were handled by project volunteers. This latter number, however, includes all cases handled whether referred by the police or not. In six instances calls were received by the police that could have been referred to RFCI, 100 were not. In Table 1 the differences in the frequency of calls received by the police and RFCI for each of the twenty months examined is presented. As can be seen these differences, except for a few minor fluctuations, tend to decrease over time.

In effect it appeared that the lack of police referrals noted, reflects either initial unfamiliarity with the project or initial reluctance by the police to refer until trust in the project and its volunteers had been established. Informal interviews with individual police officers, as well as volunteers, tend to support the latter hypothesis. It should be noted that Table 1 reveals a negative relationship between police referrals and RFCI cases received beginning in December of 1981. These differences for the most part have not been satisfactorily explained. To some extent, they reflect an increase in the number of direct call backs to the project by former clients and an increase in cases involving travellers seeking shelter due to particularly poor weather conditions at the time.

It would be reasonable to assume that if the police were initially hesitant to refer cases to RFCI, this hesitation would be more likely reflected in instances of domestic violence rather than in the less violent prone cases categories of «juvenile» and «other». In Table 2 the frequency of RFCI cases and police calls by type are presented. As can be seen the percent difference between calls received by RFCI and calls responded to by the police is greater for the domestic dispute category. The relatively large 22% difference calculated for the «other» category is attributable to the fact that, in this category, one finds direct calls to the project for advice and referrals from other sources than the police. In other words, it does appear that the initial police reluctance to refer is concentrated in those cases involving domestic disputes where the potential for violence is greatest.

Table 1: Police Calls and RFCI Cases from September 1980 to April 1982.

Month	RFCI Cases	%	Police	%	(%Dif.)
September-80	3	1.53	17	5.86	82.35
October	5	2.53	19	6.55	73.68
November	13	6.63	20	6.90	35.00
December	4	2.04	15	5.17	73.33
January-81	9	4.59	19	6.55	52.63
February	5	2.55	11	3.79	54.55
March	8	4.08	11	3.79	27.27
April	10	5.10	16	5.52	37.50
May	15	7.65	17	5.86	11.76
June	9	4.59	15	5.17	40.00
July	6	3.06	23	7.93	73.91
August	11	5.61	17	5.86	35.29
September	9	4.59	11	3.79	18.18
October	6	3.06	15	5.17	60.00
November	15	7.65	16	5.52	6.25
December	17	8.67	16	5.52	- 6.25
January-82	11	5.61	5	1.72	-54.55
February	14	7.14	10	3.45	-28.57
March	17	8.67	12	4.14	-29.41
April	9	4.59	5	1.72	-44.44
TOTAL	196	100.00	290	100.00	

Table 2: Frequency of RFCI Cases and Police Calls by Type from September 1980 to April 1982.

Type	Police	RFCI	% Difference
Domestic Dispute	147	76	+48.2
Juvenile	35	34	+ 0.03
Other	108	86	+20.0
TOTAL	290	196	+32.0

A breakdown of calls by police area is presented in Table 3. The rate of calls per 1000 population for each of the five police areas are: Campbellton 10.9, Campbellton County 4.9, Dalhousie 9.4, Jacquet River 6.4 and St. Quentin-Kedgwick 4.2. The rate of calls for Restigouche County, as a whole, is 7.1 calls per 1000 population. The fact that the police detachments of Campbellton City and the Town of Dalhousie have higher call rates than the three remaining rural detachments is in part attributable to the significant number of transients who pass through these more or less urban areas. Many of these transients seek police assistance in securing food and temporary shelter. Also in the City of Campbellton the suicide rate was very high due to repeated attempts by a handful of individuals. This tended to overinflate the call rate for the Campbellton area.

Police and RFCI calls over the 20 month period in question are categorized by the day of the week in Table 4. A chi-square analysis for independence conducted on this data revealed the expected grouping of police and RFCI calls during the weekend period. Data concerning the frequency of calls by time of day revealed that a significant number of calls were received during the evening. Overall it appears that crisis situations tend to occur during days and time periods when family members are likely to be together.

In terms of domestic disputes, out of the 147 cases recorded by the police, 14 involved the laying of criminal charges against the battering spouse. Of this latter number three charges were later withdrawn upon request of the female victim.

Table 3: Police calls by area from September 1980 to April 1982.

	Frequency	Percentage	Per 1000
Campbellton	111	38.27%	10.9
Campbellton County	64	22.07%	4.9
Dalhousie	53	18.28%	9.4
Jacquet River	34	11.72%	6.4
St-Quentin	28	9.66%	4.2
	290	100.00	35.8

Table 4: Number of Police and RFCI Calls by Day of the Week from September 1980 to April 1982.

Day	Calls RFCI	%RFCI	Calls Police	% Police
Monday	31	15.82	38	13.10
Tuesday	19	9.69	34	11.72
Wednesday	18	9.18	35	12.07
Thursday	32	16.33	43	14.83
Friday	24	12.24	39	13.45
Saturday	30	15.31	49	16.90
Sunday	42	21.43	52	17.93
TOTAL	196	100.00	290	100.00

In seven additional domestic dispute cases a peace bond was issued against the batterer as a means of deterring future violence. The issue of police charging in domestic dispute cases will be dealt with when police survey data is examined.

Another area of interest to project administration was a determination of the number of times particular couples make repeat calls to the police as a result of domestic discord. Data to answer this question was available for the 32 month time period beginning on September 1st, 1979 and ending April 30th, 1982. In Table 5 a breakdown of domestic dispute calls by repeat frequency is displayed. Over the period in question 23 couples called the police twice, 10 couples three times and 4 couples requested police assisting on four seperate occasions. The remaining 106 domestic calls were made by individual couples who did not again receive police assistance over the 32 month time period examined. In other words it appears that just under 50% of the domestic dispute calls dealt with by the police were repeats.

The above data more or less exhausts the pertinent information that was extracted from area police files. In the next section, up to date data from RFCI call reports will be examined in detail.

The project began accepting clients on September 1st, 1980. From that date to April 30th, 1983 RFCI volunteers had handled some 337 cases. The distribution of these cases by police area is revealed in Table 6.

Table 5: Number of Domestic Dispute Police Calls by Frequency from September 1979 to April 1982.

Repeated	Frequency
Twice	23
Three Times	10
Four Times	4
Have not Repeated	106
TOTAL CALLS (32 Month Period)	198

Table 6: Number of Cases Referred, by Police Detachments, from May 1st, 1980 to April 30, 1983.

Police detachment	# of cases referred	Percent
Campbellton City	182	54.00
Campbellton County	76	22.55
Dalhousie	63	18.70
Jacquet River	7	2.08
St-Quentin	9	2.67
TOTAL	337	100.00

As can be seen, nearly 77% of the cases dealt with were from either Campbellton City and its surrounding area (Campbellton County). The reasons for the small number of cases received from the detachments of Jacquet River and St. Quentin-Kedgwick are not as yet clearly understood. Reference to Table 3 indicates that for a shorter time period than being considered here these two detachments received 62 calls fitting RFCI criteria for police referral. On the other hand, over the longer time period here being considered, only 16 cases were referred to RFCI from these two detachments. To some extent the discrepancy noted may be due to the frequent changes in detachment command that occurred over the time period in question (three changes in command in both areas). Such changes do make it difficult to ensure a relative degree of stability in keeping the idea of using a service like RFCI in the minds of the police officers involved.

A frequency count of calls by type is presented in Table 7. Of the 337 cases processed, 132 were domestic disputes and 54 involved juvenile misbehaviour. In total the number of cases in these two categories accounted for approximately 55% of the cases received. The remaining 151 cases were placed in the other category is herein sub-divided.

The various means used by RFCI volunteers in disposing of cases is displayed in Table 8. The 105 cases labelled as «mediation alone» represents those instances where no further action was taken by the volunteer beyond the initial intervention.

Table 7: Type of Family Crisis, from May 1st, 1980 to April 30th, 1983.

Type	# of cases	Percent
Domestic dispute	132	39.17
Problem re: youth (behaviour)	54	16.02
Fight with family member	16	4.75
Alcohol and drug addiction	23	6.82
Emotional problem	21	6.23
Suicide tendency and attempt	18	5.34
Death and dying	4	1.19
Need for food or shelter	31	9.20
Fear of violence	15	4.45
Sexual assault	7	2.08
Advice only	16	4.75
TOTAL	337	100.00

Table 8: Dispositions of cases, from May 1st, 1980 to April 30th, 1983.

Disposition	# of cases	Percent
Mediation alone	105	31.17
Psychiatric referral	15	4.45
Hospital emergency	76	22.55
Emergency sheltered home	39	11.57
Recontact of agency	77	22.85
Detention	13	3.85
Unmotivated	12	3.56
TOTAL	337	100.00

CLIENT SURVEY RESULTS

To some extent, RFCI administrators should be heartened by the low percentage of cases (3.56%) labelled as unmotivated. This label is applied only to those who accepted the suggestion of RFCI assistance but refused to cooperate with the volunteer during the intervention process. It appears that once on the scene RFCI volunteers are able to show those involved in the intervention that further assistance is necessary in order to prevent further crisis in the future.

It should be noted that 39 cases in which emergency shelter was the primary mode of case resolution does not exhaust the number of times that RFCI refer clients to a shelter facility. What it does represent is the number of times emergency shelter was either the primary or only option exercise in the resolution of a case on the part of RFCI volunteers. As noted, the prevision of an emergency shelter is an intermediate goal of the project. Between September of 1980 and April of 1982, 121 clients were referred by project volunteers to temporary shelter facilities. Except for the Campbellton area, the project has contracted the private citizens for the use of their homes to provide emergency shelter. In all, over the trial period in question 48 such referrals were made. In the Campbellton area, shelter facilities are provided by the Maison Notre-Dame. In all, this facility has handled over 139 cases over the twenty month period in question. Of this number, 73 were referrals from RFCI and out of the total number approximately 53 domestic disputes were received by Maison Notre-Dame.

In the next chapter data will be presented indicating the degree to which former clients were satisfied with the services provided to them by project volunteers and RFCI in general.

As discussed in the introduction a «hard evaluation» of RFCI has been rejected. However, it was felt that although this decision has been made for some very valid reasons, a limited «assessment» of RFCI should be undertaken. This desire prompted those involved in the research to support the idea of conducting a consumer satisfaction survey of former clients. To fulfill this desire a questionnaire was constructed which contained items enabling former RFCI clients an opportunity to express their feelings and opinions concerning the quality and effectiveness of the services they received from the project and its volunteers. The time period used for identifying clients to be surveyed was September 1st, 1980 to April 30th, 1982.

This period was chosen because it corresponded with the period used to collect the police file data examined earlier. As a result, it would be possible to not only interview clients but also to interview comparable unreferred police calls which fit the project's criteria for intervention. Due to the wide spread rural nature of Restigouche County, it was decided that client interviews would be conducted over the telephone. A letter of introduction was sent to each person included in the sample informing them of the purpose of the survey, its confidential nature and that research assistants would be contacting them by phone to ask questions.

Unfortunately, the results of the client satisfaction survey turned out to be disappointing since only a small number of former clients were eventually located by the interviewers. Early on in the surveying process, it was decided that the survey would be restricted to domestic dispute cases exclusively. Although this decision was made after interviewing began, only a small number of cases in the juvenile and other categories were reached. The decision to interview only those victimized by domestic disputes seemed innocuous at the time. What was not anticipated however, was the fact that a large number of these cases could not be reached (moved with no forwarding address or phone number). Also, of those who were contacted a significant portion refused to be interviewed (nearly all those refusing cited fear of how their spouse might react if they found out).

The bottom line is that out of 53 domestic dispute cases identified (76 calls minus 23 repeat calls) 27 could not be reached and of those who were contacted, some refused to be interviewed. In all only seven RFCI domestic dispute victims were finally interviewed. Obviously, this size of sample cannot be used to generalize very far.

To overcome some of the deficiencies instrinsic to a small sample size, the seven RFCI domestic dispute cases interviewed are here combined with the six non-domestic dispute interviews conducted prior to the decision to restrict the sample. This strategy, although increasing the number of RFCI interviews available for analysis, does not aid in the original plan to present a detailed examination of the project's domestic dispute cases. What follows, therefore, is an examination of a small sample of RFCI cases in general and not project domestic dispute cases in particular. Given the small sample size analysis has been restricted to a general discussion of the results rather than to a detailed summary and analysis of client responses to each survey item.

The results indicated that of those clients interviewed only one knew about the project's existence prior to volunteer intervention. For the most part, the police were the first to inform them of the purpose and existence of the project. All those interviewed were asked to indicate how helpful they felt RFCI interveners had been during their crisis situation.

Sevén thought the interveners had been very helpful and only one indicated that the intervener involved had been of no help. When asked if their situation had improved since the crisis incidents, eight indicated it had gotten much better, four stated it had gotten somewhat better and one indicated no change at all. Of the 12 former clients stating improvement, six felt it was to large extent the result of RFCI intervention while the remaining six felt RFCI involvement, though somewhat responsible for improvement, was not the only factor involved. All those surveyed were asked to rate their agreement with the statement that RFCI volunteers were good listeners. Six strongly agreed with the statement, four somewhat agreed, one somewhat disagreed and two totally disagreed. When asked who they felt provided the most help at the time of crisis, seven identified RFCI, four indicated the police and the remaining two identified a friend and an unnamed social agency respectively. When asked if they would recommend the services of RFCI to a friend experiencing a crisis situation, 12 stated they would and one indicated she would not. Finally, when asked if they thought RFCI could have done more to be of assistance to them at the time of their crisis, nearly all indicated that not much more could have been done by the project or its volunteers.

For the most part the above discussion of survey results indicates a positive assessment by former clients of the services RFCI has provided to them.

Such results have to be interpreted with extreme caution since the number of clients surveyed was small and the method of sampling used was distorted by the difficulties noted earlier. However, though not conclusive the results reported are at least some comfort to those involved in RFCI's administration and day to day operations.

Although, due to small sample size, the satisfaction of RFCI clients victimized by domestic disputes cannot be determined, some information concerning domestic dispute cases generally has been salvaged. It will be recalled that not only RFCI clients were surveyed. Unreferred cases extracted from police files were also surveyed for purposes of comparison. In all 22 such interviews took place. Combining these interviews with the seven RFCI interviews completed produces a sample containing 29 subjects in total. The interview schedule devised for such cases produced the following results.

The typical female victim of a domestic dispute within Restigouche County is on average 38 years of age, has been married to her battering spouse for more than 10 years and has a household consisting of three children averaging between 12 and 13 years of age. Although the mean age of women interviewed was 38, a significant number were between the ages of 35 and 45. Approximately 50% of the battered women had a source of income seperate from their spouse. On the other hand, 65% of the abusing males had full time employment, while the remaining 35% were unemployed.

The female victims were on average two years younger and had one year more of formal education than their spouse.

It should be noted that many of the items in the domestic dispute survey questionnaire had a temporal reference point. This was necessary because some of those being interviewed were involved in more than one domestic dispute incident. Therefore, survey questions were phrases in relation to the date of the first occurence of a particular case in the files used for subject identification.

In terms of their first reported dispute incident, 15 of the women questioned indicated having been physically hurt by their spouse. Four victims indicated being threatened with a weapon, while three revealed that their spouse had caused damage to shared property. The remaining women indicated that the violence involved in the dispute was restricted to verbal threats. Fourteen of the women interviewed revealed that they had been physically harmed during prior disputes with their spouse and four mentioned being physically harmed during disputes that have occurred since the incident in question. Out of the 29 women interviewed, ten indicated having serious disputes with their spouse both before and after their first reported dispute incident.

When asked about the presence of alcohol, three women stated that both they and their spouse had been drinking, while 19 others indicated that only their spouse was consuming alcohol.

The remaining seven women indicated that neither they nor their spouse were drinking at the time of the dispute incident. When asked if they felt alcohol had contributed to their spouses' violent behavior, 22 stated that it definitely had.

A number of items in the survey dealt with victim opinions concerning police involvement during their crisis. Only four of the women questioned felt that the police were too slow in responding to their call for help. Twelve of the women indicated that the police gave them needed support and encouragement. Two of the victims believed that the police tended to provide more support to their spouse. In only five of the 29 domestic disputes here examined were charges layed by the police. In two of the remaining cases the women involved said that they did not proceed with the laying of a charge against their spouse due to lack of support from the police officers present. Additionally, two of the women cited fear of reprisal and three others cited need of financial support as reasons for not proceeding with legal action. When asked if they would call the police again, 16 said they would be hesitant to do so. In general however, the majority (20) of those questioned were satisfied with the efforts of the police officers involved.

Out of the 29 dispute victims surveyed only seven sought accommodation away from the marital home. This was the case even though 23 of those surveyed feared for their own safety and 18 of these feared for the safety of their children.

Given the nature of the sample used to gather the data presented above, some caution has to be used in the interpretation of these findings.

VOLUNTEER SURVEY

One of the key aspects that has contributed to RFCI's prima facia success has been the quality and enthusiasm of its volunteer interveners. To learn more about the volunteers: their attitudes, motivation and their background, a survey was conducted. All RFCI volunteers, whether currently active or retired, were included in the initial sample. Out of a possible sample of 20 volunteers 14 were avaílable at the time the interview was conducted.

There were ten female and four male volunteers in the survey. Although the mean age of these volunteers was approximately 39, their ages ranged between 26 to 55 years. On average the volunteers surveyed had participated in 25 crisis interventions, although the number of interventions handled by individual volunteers ranged from 1 to 69.

When asked about the pre-program crisis intervention training, three indicated a professional background, four non-professional training and seven stated they had no prior crisis intervention experience at all. In terms of current employment status none of the volunteers surveyed had full time jobs, two had part-time employment and the remaining two volunteers stated that they were housepersons.

When asked to what extent they were satisfied with the training provided to them by the project, 12 expressed complete or qualified satisfaction with the training they had received. Only one volunteer was completely dissatisfied with the training provided.

One of the reasons for only accepting cases directly referred by the police is to give the volunteer some advanced information concerning a crisis situation to arriving on the scene. When asked, 12 of 14 volunteers surveyed indicated that the advance information provided them by the police was adequate preparation. One volunteer totally disagreed with the majority on this issue while one other remained neutral.

One concern RFCI administrators have had over the last three years is the possibility of a volunteer being physically injured during a domestic crisis intervention. To date this concern has not been translated into a reality. However, ten of the volunteers did express that on some occasions they have felt uneasy about their personal safety while intervening.

Only three interveners indicated never feeling threatened (the remaining person interviewed did not answer the question).

Besides feelings of threat, volunteers have to cope with the stress associated with a demanding work schedule (on call 24 hours a day, for a seven day period). Such a schedule demands personal sacrifice and disruption in terms of one's personal life. When questioned about this form of potential disruption, two indicated that the degree of interference experienced was felt to a great degree, seven indicated some interference and five felt that their personal lives were not disrupted or interfered with at all.

The above considerations concerning personal threat and the potential for life-style disruption prompts one to be curious about what motivates an individual to become an RFCI volunteer. Survey items dealing with this question revealed what one would expect, and that is: that a majority of the volunteers indicated a deep seated desire to help others. Given the nature of volunteerism in general such a response would not seem unusual. However, an examination of the personal background of the volunteers shows that a majority have been personally involved in situations similar to those experienced by project clients. Seven of the volunteers stated that they themselves had been past victims of domestic violence, one volunteer indicated being a victim of child abuse and one revealed a past history of alcohol abuse.

Five of those interviewed indicated no past involvement in a significant personal crisis situation. Personal interviews with many of the volunteers reinforced my hunch that most feel their past experiences with personal crisis not only provided them with special insights but also motivated them to volunteer in the first place. Most feel personally obligated to help others as a result of a psychological need to repay for their own good fortune in resolving past crisis in their lives.

When asked to rate their effectiveness in resolving the crisis situations of their clients 11 of 14 interviewed indicated success in resolving a majority of the cases they had dealt with. Three volunteers reported ineffectiveness in a handful of cases. No volunteer reported being totally ineffective.

In addition to expressing confidence in their own abilities, interveners also expressed general confidence in the other participants in the project's day to day operations. Except for a few agencies identified by one volunteer as troublesome, the volunteers agreed that in general they were satisfied with the services and help received by the police and other social agencies interfaced with the project.

For the most part this exhausts all the pertinent information gathered from the survey of RFCI volunteers. In the next section I intend to introduce data gathered from a survey of the area's 40 or so police officers.

POLICE SURVEY

In the summer of 1983 a questionnaire was circulated to the 40 police officers currently serving in Restigouche County. The questionnaire contained items aimed at gathering background information on area police and their attitudes towards RFCI and domestic violence in general. In all, 38 completed questionnaires were returned for analysis.

The average age of those surveyed was 30 years. The mean number of years served as policeman was calculated to be nine years. The vast majority of those questioned had been at their present posting for more than 12 months. Although, as can be seen in Table 9, five officers indicated never having made a referral to RFCI, more than half of those surveyed stated they have used the project on at least five seperate occasions.

The responses of the five officers having no previous contact with RFCI are not included in the reporting of results pertaining to opinions about direct use of the project or its volunteers. When questioned, the five policemen who reported never having used the services of RFCI in the past stated familiarity with the project and its goals. Further questionning revealed that four of the five had not used RFCI due to lack of opportunity (new to posting, etc) while the remaining officer admitted he disagreed with the project usage in family crisis situations.

When asked to indicate their agreement with the statement that the use of project volunteers helps reduce the amount of police time spent on domestic dispute calls, 27 indicated strong agreement, three somewhat agreed, one adhered to a neutral position and one strongly disagreed.

Out of 32 officers who have used the project, 30 agreed with the idea that RFCI has had a positive impact in reducing the number of repeat domestic dispute calls received by their detachments. As with the previous survey item, one undertook a neutral position and one expressed strong disagreement.

Eighteen of the officers who had used the project stated strong agreement with the statement that RFCI volunteers are adequately prepared to deal with the crisis situations they deal with. Seven others somewhat agreed with this idea while the remaining seven officers undertook a neutral stance on this issue.

Table 9

NUMBER OF REFERRALS TO RFCI BY POLICE OFFICER

No. of Referrals	Frequency
Never	5
Once	3
Twice	5
Three times	2
Four times	0
Five times or more	23
TOTAL	38

When asked if there were instances in the past where they felt their use of an RFCI volunteer had not been an appropriate course of action, six stated yes, while 25 felt their use of volunteers had always been appropriate. All of the officers in the survey who had previously used RFCI were asked if they felt area police should continue to use the services of RFCI in the future. All 32 officers using the project gave a positive response.

In addition to background information and determination of police satisfaction with RFCI and its volunteers, officers were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with a number of statements aimed at determining police attitudes towards various issues related to domestic dispute situations. For ease of presentation, the statement along with frequency counts indicating where officers had placed themselves on the agreement/disagreement scales are for each item, are presented in Tables 10 to 16. It should be noted that the purpose for including these items in the survey was done more out of general curiosity than to provide RFCI administrators with information pertaining to the tasks of project assessment and development. It had originally occurred to me that these items could have been useful in the interpretation of results if police responses to certain questions had showed a great deal of variability. In such a case police satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the project and its volunteers could have been examined in light of specific attitudes held by police concerning domestic disputes generally.

From a consideration of the results examined thus far, it appears that nearly all of the officers questioned believe that RFCI has been useful, and generally hold a positive image of the project and its volunteer interveners. In other words the anticipated variability in police responses did not materialize. Given this result and given the fact that analysis of the data contained in Tables 10 through 16 would do little in furthering the goals of project development and assessment I have decided to present these results without further comment. However, for the interested, the results of these survey items are presented for persual.

Table 10

Statement: In most cases of domestic disputes the woman involved provoked the attack from her mate.

Rating	Frequency
Strongly agree	1
Somewhat agree	1
Neutral	23
Somewhat disagree	4
Strongly disagree	9
TOTAL	38

Table 11

Statement: In most cases of domestic disputes the woman involved does not want the police officer to arrest the man involved.

Rating	Frequency
Strongly agree	6
Somewhat agree	11
Neutral	15
Somewhat disagree	2
Strongly disagree	4
TOTAL	38

Table 12

Statement: A domestic dispute in a marriage is a social rather than a criminal matter.

Rating	Frequency
Strongly agree	9
Somewhat agree	7
Neutral	11
Somewhat disagree	5
Strongly disagree	4
TOTAL	36

Table 13

Statement: In most domestic dispute cases it is senseless to lay a charge against the male since the female involved will only refuse to co-operate with the police at a later date.

Rating	Frequency
Strongly agree	12
Somewhat agree	5
Neutral	8
Somewhat disagree	7
Strongly disagree	6
TOTAL	38

Table 14

Statement: In general police officers are inadequately trained to deal effectively with domestic disputes.

Rating	Frequency
Strongly agree	3
Somewhat agree	2
Neutral	8
Somewhat disagree	7
Strongly disagree	18
TOTAL	38

Table 15

Statement: Domestic disputes are dangerous situations that only police officers should get involved in.

Rating	Frequency
Strongly agree	1
Somewhat agree	4
Neutral	10
Somewhat disagree	8
Strongly disagree	14
TOTAL	37

Table 16

Statement: Domestic disputes are family matters that police and other outsiders should not get involved in.

Rating	Frequency
Strongly agree	1
Somewhat agree	1
Neutral	5
Somewhat disagree	5
Strongly disagree	25
TOTAL	37

«In domestic dispute cases the police should lay a charge in every cases where there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe an offence has been committed. This should be the case whether or not the woman involved wants a charge laid or not.»

The inclusion of this item in the survey was an attempt to examine the opinions of area police concerning the current social movement to implement a non-discretionary arrest policy in domestic dispute cases. Three officers refused to comment on this item leaving 35 responses for analysis. Of the 35 who did respond 22, or approximately 63% of those responding disagreed with the statement. The most frequent reason for assuming this position was that the institution of such a policy would create more problems than it would solve. Another reason given by two officers expressed concern that such a policy would be a serious threat to the institution of marriage. Finally, two other officers who disagreed with the statement believed that the practice of arresting in domestic dispute cases should only be done in those instances where the violence to the victim continues over time. As the reader may have already calculated, only 11 of the 35 officers responding to this item agreed with the statement without qualification.

The above discussion exhausts the information extracted from the police survey and for the most part represents the final presentation of the research data gathered from the initiatives outlined in the introduction.

In this section the data summarized appears to indicate that overall the police officers in the Restigouche area are pleased with the services provided by RFCI and its volunteer crisis interveners. Although such results can never be considered as conclusive, they do provide RFCI administrators with some indication as to how they are being evaluated by the police who are the project's main source of referrals.

UNITÉ D'INTERVENTION POUR CRISES FAMILIALES DE RESTIGOUCHE
RESTIGOUCHE FAMILY CRISIS INTERVENERS

CONCLUSION

In the main body of this document I have tried to adhere to the outline presented in the introduction. As will be recalled, I stated that I would be presenting a summary of results generated from research initiatives which were devised to aid administrators in the further development of the RFCI project. It will be remembered that these initiatives involved gathering information on the distribution and frequency of the project's target population and the determination of the degree of satisfaction key participants (clients, volunteers and police) hold regarding the project and its activities. For the most part these objectives have been achieved.

From a formative research point of view some of the results presented have shed light on a number of administrative concerns. Fear that police referral practices were not facilitating the project's ability to reach a significant portion of its target population provides a clear example of one such administrative concern. A comparison of police and project file data appears to indicate that the suspected hesitation of area police to refer has dissipated over time. The reliability of this interpretation is consistent with police survey results indicating the positive assessment area police officers currently have of the project and its volunteers.

Although there were major problems concerning the implementation of the client satisfaction survey, the results that were obtained do at least provide some indication that former clients have assessed the services provided them positively. If the mechanics of circulating questionnaires to former clients can be made more effective, it is feasible that the survey instrument developed can be used by project staff to monitor client satisfaction on an ongoing basis. The results generated by such an endeavour could serve a vital role in the project's further development.

The results of the volunteer survey have indicated that overall the project's key agents of service delivery are confident in their roles and are generally satisfied with project's overall operations to date.

In addition, the survey revealed that a significant number of volunteers have personally been involved in crisis situations similar to those faced by project clients. The implications that these results have for volunteer training and selection practices are still to be explored by project managers. In any event this later result does provide some understanding of the dynamics underlying volunteer motivation. As with the client satisfaction questionnaire, an instrument has been devised that could be of some use to RFCI staff in terms of further project monitoring and assessment.

The survey conducted on area police personnel once again revealed general satisfaction with the services provided by the project and its volunteer interveners. It appears that this satisfaction may be related to a perception held by the police that use of the project has saved them time, and that RFCI has had an impact in reducing the number of repeat domestic dispute calls they now receive (of course, these perceptions have not yet been verified by supporting research data). The police survey results also show that a majority of area policemen are not in favour of a policy that would compel them to lay charges in all domestic dispute cases where adequate grounds exist for doing so.

Identification and description of RFCI's target population, articulation of objectives, documentation of project activities and determination of the degree of client, police and volunteer satisfaction with the project in general have been the main research activities carried out thus far (the articulation of objects and program activities were dealt within the companion report on project operations). The accomplishment of these various tasks has provided an information base upon which an outcome oriented program evaluation could be developed. Besides the noted difficulties encountered in reaching former project clients, one other serious obstacle has been encountered. The research component was established over a year after the project itself had been established.

From a formative research perspective this late starting date meant that a great deal of valuable data had already been lost or had become difficult to access. The call report form used by RFCI volunteers, for example, was from a research perspective an inadequate tool for the generation of reliable and comprehensive data on volunteer activities.

Also, some information had been lost due to the file maintenance practices of certain agencies of destroying files after a certain period of time has past. For these and other reasons it is suggested that anyone considering conducting formative research on a project like RFCI should attempt to establish their research regime during the project's pre-operational stage.

In doing so the research team will have more control over the design and implementation of a project's information gathering mechanisms and thus be more able to ensure that pertinent and reliable data is gathered. Early involvement is especially important when the goal of research is formative rather than evaluative in nature. Obviously, in order to aid in the formative process it is better to start at the ground floor than to get involved after a more or less concrete structure is in place. In terms of RFCI a great deal of research time and energy was devoted in adapting, at least from a research perspective, an unreliable and poorly structured data base. Earlier research involvement could have prevented this situation from occurring.

I hope that the reader has found the information included in this document useful and informative. Further information from the research on the RFCI is contained in articles in the R.C.M.P. Gazette (Daigle et al., 1983; Leger, 1983)

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